

A Guide to Safe Living for Off Campus Residents

Over the years Public Safety has been a facilitator of information and programs designed to help make campus living safe. We realize though, that some students live off campus and are in need of information more specific to living off campus in regard to guidance on personal safety and property protection.

ARE YOU CONSIDERING RENTING AN OFF CAMPUS APARTMENT?

Look for the following before making a commitment.

- Outer doors should stay locked at all times.
- Solid core wooden or metal doors with secured dead-bolt locks, or at least shielded door knobs to deter access to the locking mechanism.
- Peep-holes in the entry allow you to view visitors before opening a door.
- Windows and accessible fire escapes need good locking mechanisms.
- Good working smoke detectors in place. There should be at least two emergency escape routes in case of fire.
- Shrubs and trees should not allow places for concealment near doors and windows.
- Good lighting deters crime.

SAFETY CHECK LIST TIPS FOR YOUR APARTMENT!

- Don't allow strangers into your apartment.
- Don't leave doors to your apartment or building unlocked. If you have to run an errand for a few minutes, be sure to lock up.
- Avoid putting your first name on mailboxes. Use your first initial.
- DO NOT ADVERTISE that you are not home with notes on the door.
- Use timers to turn lights and televisions on and off when you are away.
- At night, cover and lock your windows and doors.

- Keep keys in your possession at all times.
- Do not tag your keys with your name and address.
- If you return home and think it has been illegally entered, DO NOT ENTER. Get to a safe place and call the Police.
- Get to know your local Police Department members and Campus Public Safety Officers. Keep the phone numbers in this guide near your telephone and remember, in an emergency, just dial 911.

“Street smarts”

- Put Campus Safety in speed dial and call if you think you are being followed: 518-388-6911
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times and stay in well-lit areas.
- Stay near people. Avoid short-cuts.
- Carry only necessary credit cards and money and avoid using ATM machines when alone and at night.
- Walk with someone you know whenever possible.
- If someone is following you, cross the street, change directions or vary your pace. If that person persists, get to a safe place where there are lots of people around and call the Police immediately.
- Don't stop to give directions to strangers.
- If you carry a purse or handbag, keep it close to your body. If your purse or bag is “snatched”, don't fight. Report the incident to the Police immediately.
- Look aware, look confident and walk briskly.
- Do not engage in activity that may cause you to not see or hear an attacker coming.
- Please remember, ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS adversely affect your chances of evading an attack. STAY SOBER, STAY ALERT!
- TRY OUR “RESIST” CLASSES!

Bus and Car Safety

- Carry a schedule and know what route you will be taking.
- After dark, arrive just before the bus is due.
- Sit at the front or near others on the bus.
- Always pay attention to your surroundings and any activity near you or your car.
- Have your key ready as you approach your vehicle.
- If someone appears to be “hanging around” your car, keep walking.
- Keep valuables out of sight or in the trunk.
- Park in well-lit, busy places. If you have to park in a poorly lit area, or have to walk some distance to and from your car, have someone walk with you if possible.
- Keep your car doors and windows locked. Roll the windows far enough so you can get fresh air, but no one can get in.
- Don't stop to assist broken down vehicles. Drive to the nearest phone and report it to the Police.
- If you feel you are being followed, drive safely to a well-lit, occupied area such as a 24 hour gas station or grocery store, or better yet, a Police or occupied Fire Station.
- We do not recommend using drive-up ATM machines, especially if you are alone.
- If your car breaks down, stay inside, windows up, doors locked and call the police.

DEALING WITH OBSCENE OR ANNOYING PHONE CALLS

- **HANG UP**—As soon as you hear obscenity, improper question or no response. It may take a while, but if you are consistent and hang up each time, they usually stop calling. Hang up normally. You don't want the caller to know they're making you upset.

- Report calls to the Police and the telephone company and ask about tracing calls or getting an unlisted number.
- Make detailed note of times, numbers, dates etc., in case the calls continue and criminal charges are filed.
- Don't fall for scams. Never give personal information over the phone.
- Place ads with caution. Use a post office box.
- Guard your personal information by not giving it out.

Protecting your personal property

- Keep a detailed written inventory of valuables.
- Participate in Public Safety [Operation ID](#)
- Keep valuables locked and secured.

For those who like to bike!

- Use reflective tape and reflector on your bike for visibility.
- Keep to the right and ride **with** traffic. Obey traffic laws.
- Park your bike in open, well-lit and frequently traveled areas and lock it up with a high quality bike lock.
- Public Safety can register your bike with both our local registry and the National Bike Registry. <http://www.nationalbikeregistry.com/>
- When you arrive on campus, use the bicycle racks to lock your bike.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Campus Safety	(518) 388-6911
Sexual Assault Resource Hotline	(518) 388-6600
Schenectady Police	(518) 374-7744
Schenectady Rape Crisis	(518) 346-2266
YWCA D.V. Hotline	(518) 374-3386
Ellis Hospital Nott Street	(518) 243-4121
Ellis Hospital McClellan	(518) 382-2222

Programs offered by Campus Safety

- RESIST (Rape Education Safety Instinctive Self-defense Techniques)
- DDC (Defensive Driving Course)
- Sexual Assault Prevention
- Fire Safety Presentations
- Operation ID to register your property
- First aid and CPR training
- Vehicle lockout assistance
- Vehicle “jump” starts
- Remember to visit our web site at: <https://www.union.edu/offices/safety/>